

## **Assembly Joint Resolution No. 49**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 151**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 49—Relative to Filipino veterans.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 18, 2000.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AJR 49, Bock. Filipino veterans of the United States Armed Forces: full benefits.

This measure would memorialize the President and the Congress of the United States during the Second Session of the 106th Congress to take action necessary to grant full veterans benefits to Filipino veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

WHEREAS, The Philippine Islands, as a result of the Spanish-American War, were a possession of the United States between 1898 and 1946; and

WHEREAS, In 1934, the Philippine Independence Act (P.L. 73-127) set a 10-year timetable for the eventual independence of the Philippines and in the interim established a government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines with certain powers over its own internal affairs; and

WHEREAS, The granting of full independence ultimately was delayed for two years until 1946 because of the Japanese occupation of the islands from 1942 to 1945; and

WHEREAS, Between 1934 and the final independence of the Philippine Islands in 1946, the United States retained certain sovereign powers over the Philippines, including the right, upon order of the President of the United States, to call into the service of the United States Armed Forces all military forces organized by the Commonwealth government; and

WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Executive Order of July 26, 1941, brought the Philippine Commonwealth Army into the service of the United States Armed Forces of the Far East under the command of Lieutenant General Douglas MacArthur; and

WHEREAS, Under the Executive Order of July 26, 1941, Filipinos were entitled to full veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 200,000 Filipino soldiers, driven by a sense of honor and dignity, battled under the United States Command after 1941 to preserve our liberty; and

WHEREAS, There are four groups of Filipino nationals who are entitled to all or some of the benefits to which United States veterans are entitled. These are:

(1) Filipinos who served in the regular components of the United States Armed Forces.

(2) Regular Philippine Scouts, called “Old Scouts,” who enlisted in Filipino-manned units of the United States Army prior to October 6, 1945. Prior to World War II, these troops assisted in the maintenance of domestic order in the Philippines and served as a combat-ready force to defend the islands against foreign invasion, and during the war, they participated in the defense and retaking of the islands from Japanese occupation.

(3) Special Philippine Scouts, called “New Scouts,” who enlisted in the United States Armed Forces between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, primarily to perform occupation duty in the Pacific following World War II.

(4) Members of the Philippine Commonwealth Army who on July 26, 1941, were called into the service of the United States Armed Forces. This group includes organized guerrilla resistance units that were recognized by the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, The first two groups, Filipinos who served in the regular components of the United States Armed Forces and Old Scouts, are considered United States veterans and are generally entitled to the full range of United States veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, The other two groups, New Scouts and members of the Philippine Commonwealth Army, are eligible for certain veterans benefits, some of which are lower than full veterans benefits; and

WHEREAS, United States veterans medical benefits for the four groups of Filipino veterans vary depending upon whether the person resides in the United States or the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, The eligibility of Old Scouts for benefits based on military service in the United States Armed Forces has long been established; and

WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans Affairs operates a comprehensive program of veterans benefits in the present government of the Republic of the Philippines, including the operation of a federal Department of Veterans Affairs office in Manila; and

WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans Affairs does not operate a program of this type in any other country; and

WHEREAS, The program in the Philippines evolved because the Philippine Islands were a United States possession during the period 1898–1946, and many Filipinos have served in the United States Armed Forces, and because the preindependence Philippine Commonwealth Army was called into the service of the United States Armed Forces during World War II (1941–1945); and

WHEREAS, Our nation has failed to meet the promises made to those Filipino soldiers who fought as American soldiers during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The Congress passed legislation in 1946 limiting and precluding Filipino veterans that fought in the service of the United States during World War II from receiving most veterans benefits that were available to them before 1946; and

WHEREAS, Many Filipino veterans have been unfairly treated by the classification of their service as not being service rendered in the United States Armed Forces for purposes of benefits from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, All other nationals who served in the United States Armed Forces have been recognized and granted full rights and benefits, but the Filipinos, as American nationals at the time of service, were and still are denied recognition and singled out for exclusion, and this treatment is unfair and discriminatory; and

WHEREAS, On October 20, 1996, President Clinton issued a proclamation honoring the nearly 100,000 Filipino veterans of World War II, soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army, who fought as a component of the United States Armed Forces alongside allied forces for four long years to defend and reclaim the Philippine Islands, and thousands more who joined the United States Armed Forces after the war; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully memorializes the President and the Congress of the United States during the Second Session of the 106th Congress to take action necessary to honor our country's moral obligation to provide these Filipino veterans with the military benefits that they deserve, including, but not limited to, holding related hearings, and acting favorably on legislation pertaining to granting full veterans benefits to Filipino veterans of the United States Armed Forces; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

